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Water Quality Impairments Can Be Restored with Grant Funds from Ohio EPA

Ohio EPA will award about \$2.5 million later this year to help communities restore Ohio waterways impaired from nonpoint source pollution. Applicants may seek up to \$350,000 and proposals are due by May 13, 2011.

Nonpoint source pollution is the leading cause of water quality impairment in Ohio. It is caused by rain or snowmelt moving over and through the ground, picking up natural and human-made pollutants and depositing them in lakes, rivers, wetlands and other waterways. Other forms of nonpoint source pollution include modifications to natural stream flow, habitat alteration and nutrients. Polluted runoff can have harmful effects on drinking water supplies, recreation, fisheries and wildlife. In 1987, the federal Clean Water Act created a national grant program to control nonpoint source pollution. Approved projects would receive funding from October 1, 2011, through September 30, 2012.

Project types that may be eligible for grants include:

- stream restoration projects such as natural stream channel reconstruction, over-wide ditch conversion, habitat restoration and dam removal;
- wetlands restorations to promote effective filtering of nonpoint source pollutants with particular interest in projects that restore previously existing wetland areas;
- innovative storm water demonstrations such as retrofitting public commons or parking areas with permeable pavement, installing small scale green roofs on public buildings, installing biofiltration islands or vegetated retention structures, storm water treatment wetlands or rainwater harvesting and reuse systems for public buildings or facilities;
- inland lake management and restoration for publicly owned and accessible lakes;
- highly targeted agricultural best management practice projects; and
- acid localized mine drainage abatement and abandoned mine land reclamation projects to reduce or eliminate sediments and other pollutants from mining-impaired water bodies.

Grants cover a three-year period and require a local 20 percent share of the total project cost. Eligible applicants include counties, municipalities, townships, park districts, local watershed groups, nonprofit organizations, soil and water conservation districts, conservation organizations and others. Applicants may apply for one grant for each watershed, but may include several types of projects within a single application up to \$350,000. Grant sponsors already holding two or more projects should not apply for additional funding until existing projects are complete and closed. No grant funds may be used for water quality monitoring activities.

Applications are available through Ohio EPA's district offices, or by emailing or calling [Russ Gibson](#) at (614) 644-2020 or [Martha Spurbeck](#) at (614) 644-2869. More information on the [grants and an electronic application](#) is available online, along with examples of [previously successful projects](#).